



May 16, 2003

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the National Association of Counties (NACo), I urge you to vote in favor of H.R. 1904, the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003.

Along with western governors, the federal land management agencies and other partners, NACo helped to craft and enthusiastically embraced the 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy in order to reduce wildland fire risks to communities and the environment. Local-level collaboration to build consensus for forest-health projects is at the heart of that strategy document and its implementation plan. In fact, NACo's support for the effort is based on that core commitment to local-level collaboration. NACo supports H.R. 1904 in large part because it *codifies* and *makes mandatory* these very elements of the 10-Year Strategy.

H.R. 1904 also implements some of the hard lessons learned over the past few years as counties have worked under the 10-Year Strategy to reduce the risks of catastrophic wildfires and insects and disease. County officials working hard to protect their communities have discovered that many barriers to sound management still exist. They agree that it is vital that administrative and judicial barriers to active management on the ground be removed. H.R. does this while at the same time providing ample opportunity for public scrutiny, input and accountability.

Because of the importance of this issue to counties nationwide NACo will report the vote of each Member of Congress on H.R. 1904 in its annual Congressional Scorecard.

NACo urges you to clear the way for the federal land management agencies to implement a *cohesive strategy to restore the health of our forests on a landscape scale – not just narrow strips* around communities – using an appropriate mix of management practices.

America's counties thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Larry E. Naake'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Larry E. Naake
Executive Director